

What is claimed is:

1           1. A method of presenting content in a web-based  
2 television (TV) environment, the method comprising:  
3           determining a local context for a viewer of a web-  
4 based TV system;  
5           customizing a content page based on the determined  
6 local context; and  
7           presenting the customized content page to the  
8 viewer.

1           2. The method of claim 1 wherein the local context  
2 corresponds to a local time of day.

1           3. The method of claim 1 wherein the local context  
2 corresponds to a day-part.

1           4. The method of claim 1 wherein the local context  
2 corresponds to one or more of the following factors  
3 associated with the viewer: a geographic location, a  
4 history of viewing patterns, personal or demographic data,  
5 or a history of e-commerce transactions.

1           5. The method of claim 4 wherein the personal or  
2 demographic data comprises one or more of the following:  
3 age, gender, occupation, income, education, interests, or  
4 family status.

1           6. The method of claim 1 wherein the web-based TV  
2 environment comprises a set top device at a local site and a  
3 host system at a remote site, and wherein determining a  
4 local context comprises accessing information stored at the  
5 local site.

1           7. The method of claim 1 wherein the web-based TV  
2 environment comprises a set top device at a local site and a  
3 host system at a remote site, and wherein determining a  
4 local context comprises accessing information stored at the  
5 remote site.

1           8. The method of claim 1 wherein the content page  
2 comprises text, graphics, utilities and/or a display of a TV  
3 program.

1           9. The method of claim 1 wherein customizing the  
2 content page comprises adjusting a look and feel of the  
3 content page to complement the determined local context.

1           10. The method of claim 9 wherein adjusting a look  
2 and feel of the content page comprises specifying one or  
3 more background colors for the content page.

1           11. The method of claim 9 wherein adjusting a look  
2 and feel of the content page comprises specifying a thematic  
3 element associated with the determined local context.

1           12. The method of claim 9 wherein adjusting a look  
2 and feel of the content page comprises modifying a viewer  
3 interface for the content page.

1                   13. The method of claim 1 wherein customizing the  
2 content page comprises changing content in the page.

1                   14. The method of claim 13 wherein changing content  
2 comprises changing text and/or graphics on the content page.

1                   15. The method of claim 14 wherein changing text  
2 and/or graphics comprises changing advertisements.

1                   16. The method of claim 14 wherein changing text  
2 and/or graphics comprises changing news or feature  
3 headlines.

1                   17. The method of claim 13 wherein changing content  
2 comprises modifying the content page to provide access to  
3 one or more utilities.

1                   18. The method of claim 1 wherein customizing the  
2 content page comprises providing access to a communications  
3 utility.

1                   19. The method of claim 17 wherein modifying the  
2 content page comprises changing one or more functionalities  
3 made available by the content page.

1                   20. The method of claim 17 wherein modifying the  
2 content page comprises changing links made available by the  
3 content page, the links providing access to associated  
4 resources.

1           21. The method of claim 1 wherein the web-based TV  
2 environment comprises a set top device at a local site and a  
3 host system at a remote site, and wherein the method further  
4 comprises the set top device receiving context-related  
5 information from the host system and storing the received  
6 information at the local site for future use.

1           22. The method of claim 21 wherein customizing the  
2 content page comprises retrieving a first portion of  
3 context-related information from the local site and a second  
4 portion of context-related information from the remote site.

1           23. The method of claim 22 wherein the first  
2 portion of context-related information corresponds to a look  
3 and feel of the content page and the second portion of  
4 context-related information corresponds to content of the  
5 content page.

1           24. The method of claim 23 further comprising  
2 determining whether the set top device is actively connected  
3 to the host system.

1           25. The method of claim 24 wherein customizing the  
2 content page comprises retrieving context-related  
3 information (i) from the remote site if the set top device  
4 is determined to be actively connected to the host system  
5 (ii) from the local site if the set top device is determined  
6 not to be actively connected to the host system.

1           26. The method of claim 1 wherein customizing the  
2 content page comprises receiving context-related information  
3 in a vertical blanking interval of a TV signal.

1           27. The method of claim 1 wherein customizing the  
2 content page comprises receiving context-related information  
3 using satellite communications.

1           28. The method of claim 1 wherein presenting the  
2 customized content page to the viewer comprises displaying a  
3 window on the viewer's display monitor.

1           29. The method of claim 1 wherein presenting the  
2 customized content page comprises presenting TV-based  
3 content or computer network-based content or a combination  
4 of both.

1           30. A method of presenting electronic content in a  
2 computer-network based environment including a host computer  
3 and a local computer, the method comprising:

4           determining a local context for a user of the  
5 computer network;

6           selectively retrieving from the host computer or  
7 from the local computer context-related information  
8 associated with the determined local context; and

9           customizing the content page based on the retrieved  
10 context-related information.

1           31. The method of claim 30 wherein the selective  
2 retrieval of context-related information from the host  
3 computer or from the local computer depends on whether the  
4 local computer presently is in communication with the host  
5 computer.

1           32. The method of claim 30 further comprising  
2 determining whether the local computer presently is in  
3 communication with the host computer.

1           33. The method of claim 32 wherein the selective  
2 retrieval of context-related information comprises  
3 retrieving information from the host computer if the local  
4 computer is determined to be in communication with the host  
5 computer, and retrieving information from the local computer  
6 if the local computer is determined not to be in  
7 communication to the host computer.

1           34. The method of claim 30 wherein the computer-  
2 network based environment comprises a web-based TV system.

1           35. The method of claim 34 wherein the local  
2 computer comprises a set top device at a local site and the  
3 host computer comprises a host system at a remote site, and  
4 wherein determining the local context comprises accessing  
5 information stored at the local site.

1           36. The method of claim 34 wherein the local  
2 computer comprises a set top device at a local site and the  
3 host computer comprises a host system at a remote site, and  
4 wherein determining the local context comprises accessing  
5 information stored at the remote site.

1           37. The method of claim 30 wherein the local  
2 context corresponds to a local time of day.

1           38. The method of claim 30 wherein the local  
2 context corresponds to a day-part.

1           39. The method of claim 30 wherein the local  
2 context corresponds to one or more of the following factors  
3 associated with a viewer: a geographic location, a history  
4 of viewing patterns, personal or demographic data, or a  
5 history of e-commerce transactions.

1           40. The method of claim 39 wherein the personal or  
2 demographic data comprises one or more of the following:  
3 age, gender, occupation, income, education, interests, or  
4 family status.

1           41. The method of claim 30 wherein the content page  
2 comprises text, graphics, utilities and/or a display of a TV  
3 program.

1           42. The method of claim 30 wherein customizing the  
2 content page comprises adjusting a look and feel of the  
3 content page to complement the determined local context.

1           43. The method of claim 42 wherein adjusting a look  
2 and feel of the content page comprises specifying one or  
3 more background colors for the content page.

1           44. The method of claim 42 wherein adjusting a look  
2 and feel of the content page comprises specifying a thematic  
3 element associated with the determined local context.

1           45. The method of claim 42 wherein adjusting a look  
2 and feel of the content page comprises modifying a viewer  
3 interface for the content page.

1           46. The method of claim 30 wherein customizing the  
2 content page comprises changing content in the page.

1           47. The method of claim 46 wherein changing content  
2 comprises changing text and/or graphics on the content page.

1           48. The method of claim 47 wherein changing text  
2 and/or graphics comprises changing advertisements.

1           49. The method of claim 47 wherein changing text  
2 and/or graphics comprises changing news or feature  
3 headlines.

1           50. The method of claim 46 wherein changing content  
2 comprises modifying the content page to provide access to  
3 one or more utilities.

1           51. The method of claim 50 wherein modifying the  
2 content page comprises providing access to a communications  
3 utility.

1           52. The method of claim 50 wherein modifying the  
2 content page comprises changing one or more functionalities  
3 made available by the content page.

1           53. The method of claim 50 wherein modifying the  
2 content page comprises changing links made available by the  
3 content page, the links providing access to associated  
4 resources.

1               54. The method of claim 30 wherein the local  
2 computer comprises a set top device at a local site and the  
3 host computer comprises a host system at a remote site, and  
4 wherein the method further comprises the set top device  
5 receiving context-related information from the host system  
6 and storing the received information at the local site for  
7 future use.

1               55. The method of claim 54 wherein customizing the  
2 content page comprises retrieving a first portion of  
3 context-related information from the local site and a second  
4 portion of context-related information from the remote site.

1               56. The method of claim 55 wherein the first  
2 portion of context-related information corresponds to a look  
3 and feel of the content page and the second portion of  
4 context-related information corresponds to content of the  
5 content page.

1               57. The method of claim 54 further comprising  
2 determining whether the set top device is actively connected  
3 to the host system.

1               58. The method of claim 57 wherein customizing the  
2 content page comprises retrieving context-related  
3 information (i) from the remote site if the set top device  
4 is determined to be actively connected to the host system  
5 (ii) from the local site if the set top device is determined  
6 not to be actively connected to the host system.

1               59. The method of claim 30 wherein customizing the  
2 content page comprises receiving context-related information  
3 in a vertical blanking interval of a TV signal.

1               60. The method of claim 30 wherein customizing the  
2 content page comprises receiving context-related information  
3 using satellite communications.

1               61. The method of claim 30 further comprising  
2 presenting the customized content page to a viewer.

1               62. A method of presenting electronic content in a  
2 web-based television (TV) system including a host computer  
3 and a local computer, the method comprising:

4               detecting that a user of the web-based TV system has  
5 requested access to a content page;

6               determining a local context for the user;

7               determining whether the user is logged in to the  
8 host computer;

9               retrieving context-specific information associated  
10 with the determined local context, the information being  
11 retrieved (i) from the host computer if the user is  
12 determined to be logged in to the host computer, or (ii)  
13 from the local computer if the user is not logged in to the  
14 host computer; and

15               customizing the content page based on the retrieved  
16 context-specific information.

1           63. A method of presenting electronic content in a  
2 web-based television (TV) system including a host computer  
3 and a local computer, the method comprising:

4           detecting that a viewer of the web-based TV system  
5 has requested access to a content page;

6           determining a local time of day for the viewer;

7           determining whether the viewer is logged in to the  
8 host computer;

9           retrieving day-part information associated with the  
10 determined local time of day, the day-part information being  
11 retrieved (i) from the host computer if the viewer is  
12 determined to be logged in to the host computer, or (ii)  
13 from the local computer if the viewer is not logged in to  
14 the host computer; and

15           customizing the content page based on the retrieved  
16 day-part information.

1           64. A web-based TV system comprising:

2           a set top device at a local site being operatively  
3 coupled and capable of logging in to a host computer at a  
4 remote site, the set top device comprising software  
5 instructions to perform the following operations:

6           determine a local context for a viewer of the web-  
7 based TV system;

8           customize a content page based on the determined  
9 local context; and

10           present the customized content page to the viewer.

1           65. The system of claim 64 further comprising a  
2 display monitor, coupled to the set top device, on which the  
3 customized content page is presented to the viewer.

1           66. The system of claim 64 wherein the set top  
2 device further comprises:

3           a network adapter for communicating with the host  
4 computer; and

5           a TV tuner for receiving TV signals.

1           67. The system of claim 66 wherein the set top  
2 device further comprises instructions to selectively receive  
3 context information through the network adapter or through  
4 the TV tuner.

1           68. The system of claim 67 wherein the instructions  
2 to selectively receive context information comprise  
3 instructions to receive information (i) through the network  
4 adapter if the set top device is actively logged in to the  
5 host computer; and (ii) through the TV tuner if if the set  
6 top device is not actively logged in to the host computer.

1               69. Computer software, tangibly embodied in a  
2 computer-readable medium and/or in a propagated carrier  
3 signal, for presenting electronic content in a web-based  
4 television (TV) system including a host computer and a local  
5 computer, the software comprising instructions to perform  
6 the following operations:

7                   detect that a user of the web-based TV system has  
8   requested access to a content page;

9 determine a local context for the user;

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10      determine whether the user is logged in to the host  
11 computer;
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12 retrieve context-specific information associated

with the determined local context, the information being retrieved (i) from the host computer if the user is determined to be logged in to the host computer, or (ii) from the local computer if the user is not logged in to the host computer; and

18 customize the content page based on the retrieved  
19 context-specific information.